

1353 2 25
Ecclēsia versa, non Eversa :

O R,

The Churches swept,

Not Tumbld down.

Turned, not Overturned,

But prop'd up to their just Height,

Neither too Low nor too High.

*Churches, of all our Buildings, bighest are,
Of all Mankind, Is it not very rare
To find Church-Claims less High than Lucifer's,
Trampling (like Popes) on Kings, States, Emperors?
Cross them and they will Curle you without fail,
And send you to the Devil and the Jail.*

Humbly Addressed to the serious, speedy, and necessary
Consideration of this present Parliament.

By a hearty well-wisher to the Health and Prosperity of the
Church of England, by Law established.

LONDON: Printed, and are to be Sold by B. Bragge
at the Raven in Paternoster-Row. 1707.

Eccelesie versis, non Forsis:

O R

The Churches weep

Not Tumbld down.

Turned, not Overturned,

But prop'd up to their just Height.

Neither too Low nor too High.



Churches of all sorts, which are;

Of all Mansions, in this time

To find Church-Claims, is this than Justice?

Is this (the Pope's) in Kings, States, Empires?

Stays the Church, and does not without fail

And leads you to the Devil and the Fall.

Humbly Addressed to the serious, steady, and necessary
Consideration of this present Parliament.

By a nearly well-wisher to the State and Liberty of the
Church of England, by Law established.

LONDON: Printed, and are to be sold by B. Baskin
at the Raven in Paternoster-Row. 1707.

THE
PREFACE.

A Church-Mender, or a Reformer, is a Name as suspicious as Invidious.

Suspicious, because many Church-Menders are like the Carpenters and Masons, now at Work upon Paul's-Steeple, mending it as Henry VIII. did the wanton Nomeries, and the fat Priories, the better to furnish and repair their tatter'd Purse.

Invidious, because the greater the Skill and Art is shown in the Project, the more greedily is it pursued with the Iron Teeth of Envy; Which gnaws and banquets chiefly upon the fat and dainty Bits, (wisely provided to be the Priest's Portion and Share, in all Sacrifices, by the Law-Levitical.) Yet Envy never preys upon dead Carcasses, the Cannibal devours Men alive, but never follows them into the Grave; yet it is as Ravenous as Pharaoh's Lean Kine, gormandizing and eating up the fat ones to choofe.

Never was there a Triumphant Conqueror, an honest Judge, or a prudent Statesman, or learned Author, but Envy pursued his Name and Fame to blast it: Nothing but the Grave can secure Merit from Envy.

The PREFACE.

— dicique beatum
Ante obitum nemo —

Only Mens Tombs from Envy sets them free ;
First Merit quits the Stage, then Plaudite.

But in this Project I neither gape for Honour nor Reward in this Life, which is now almost come (with me) to its Period or Full-stop : And therefore I would not vouchsafe to Scribble a Line, for any thing that this World can afford me, more than what a merciful God has blest me with already ; nothing but Love to Mankind, and the Peace of Christendom sets now my Pen at work.

Nor will it ever appear that I have any other design in this Project, than to make Her Majesty's Government easy, the established Churches of Great-Britain easy, and all the People easy.

That I appear Incognito and thus muffled up, is not that I am either afraid or ashamed of any thing here writ. For (in want of a Praise-ensuring Friend) I may honestly, without a Rape upon Modesty (being thus masked) without blushing, be mine own Trumpet, in this respect, that this Project of Church-work and Church-mending, is so very harmless and innocent, both for matter and manner of Expression, that it will offend none justly but Knaves and Fools, that is, perhaps some will say, the majority of Mankind in this wicked and silly World. A very quaint Recommendation ! Farewel.

Ecclesia

writing any thing in obligation thereof yet the same King
and Parliament 1 and 2 Edw. 6. 1. did think meet to alter
the first: *Canon-lawyer* Book, and make it more full, and

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Ecclesia versa, non Eversa.
OR,
The Church swept, not Tumb'd
down.

The Church swept, not Tumb'd
down.

THE very Style and Epithet of the Church of England
by Law established, speaks its Grounds and Founda-
tion, namely, the Law, on which it is framed,
and built, and supported; and on which, at this
day, it stands *steady*, so long as the Law (which upholds and
maintains it) happens to stand *steady*.

By Law establish'd! What Law?

It cannot be meant the Law of God, for then it would be
impious in the Kings and Parliaments of England to alter the
same; because it is impossible for them to be wiser than
God, and therefore impossible to mend it; and wicked to
attempt any alteration, though it be intended for the better;
of which our weak Capacities are incapable.

The Church of England (then) by Law established is our
Church erected (as Paul's is) by the Industry and Skill of
Workmen, some good, some bad, some but indifferent Ar-
tists when they framed it and put it together, by Acts of
Parliament.

The first Act that framed and established this Protestant
Church of England was made and enacted in 2 and 3 Edw. 6. 1.
And though that Act says, that it was made by the Aid of the
Holy Ghost (and consequently must be Holy Writ or Scripture)
and a great Penalty on all that are so daring as to speak or
write

write any thing in derogation thereof, yet the same King and Parliament 5 and 6 Edw. 6. 1. did think meet to alter the first Common-prayer Book, and make it more fit, and more fully perfect (the very words of the said Act.)

Though in my single Opinion, the first Book of Common-Prayer and Administration of the Sacraments, and other Rites and Ceremonies, together with the form of making of Archbishops, Bishops, or Priests and Deacons was very godly; but of human Constitution and by Act of Parliament: And therefore Alterable, and has been alter'd for the better by the 8 Eliz. 1. and yet better and better by 14 Car. 2. 14.

So that now the Church of England is not only by Law established, firm and upright, but by Laws (three or four) established, reared, and erected.

But before I further proceed, it is very requisite that I encounter an Objection, which though very idle, frivolous, and of no weight, yet has prov'd to be a great stumbling-block in the way of Reformation, and mending this Church by Laws established, when it happens to be dilapidated (like Paul's the Mother-Church) and out of frame.

Obje^t. Namely, That it is against good Policy to alter any thing in Church Matters; especially since the Prophet commands from the Mouth of God, Jer. 6. 16. Thus saith the Lord, stand ye in the way, and see and look for the old Paths where is the good way, and walk in it, and ye shall find rest for your Souls.

Ans^w. To which it is readily answer'd, That old Use and Custom requires of us so much reverence, as not rashly to innovate and break through the same, but make a stand first, and consider, whether it be a good way, or a bad; and once finding which is the good way, walk in it, and ye shall find rest for your Souls.

What is this to the purpose, or to prove, That if we will find rest for our Souls we must walk in the old ways, right or wrong, true or false, good or bad, trudge on, though you used of old to walk in idolatrous, Popish, and Antichristian Superstition; or any other Error, as Arrianism, that great old and spreading Ulcer, when totus mundus was Arrianus. How apt are Men to make the Holy Scriptures war^r and stretch

stretch to comply with their Self-Interest and Folly?

The Church of Rome, indeed, with some colour of reason (*granting the same to be infallible*) makes this Objection against the Protestants, and against all Reformation: It was sixteen Years before the Christian Princes could perswade the Pope, one after another, to Call the Council of Trent, (assembled in the Reign of our famous Queen Elizabeth) alledging *this very Objection* against all Reformation; Ask for the old Paths.

But it is *nonsense* (to say no worse) for the Church of England, that confesses her *Errability* and *Frailty*, and that has so often *been changed* for the better, to doat on the old Paths; and a Man may as rationally say, *I will keep my old Ulcer*, my old Gout, my old Cottage, my old House from all Amendment and Repairs, as to say *I will keep my old Church*, my old Chappel, *old Paul's*, that are dilapidated and miserably rent and torn) and never seek for amendments.

Shall the Civil State need or use purging, cleansing, and restoring by wholesome Laws, by successive Parliaments, and as often as Time and Corruption consumes and decays it; and shall the Ecclesiastical State (which is more subject to Corruption) reject all Remedy and Alteration for the better? For Instance, In the Writ *de Heretico Comburendo*, and the Writ *de Excommunicato Capiendo*, what Mischief, what bloody Work was made with the former, in Popish Times, and yet it was many Years in force, and uncanceled, after Popery was anathematized and *out of date*, and before Protestant Parliaments would think of making it null and void.

Also the other Writ *de Excommunicato Capiendo*, another Popishly Invented Engine, by the subtilty and malice of Priests, to be enabled (as at this day *still they are*) to wreak their Malice against any Man, how great soever, if they brand him first, and mark him, as did the Heathen Priests the Beasts appointed for Sacrifice, with the Name of *Heretick*; *Heretick*, *Heretick* is the Ecclesiastical *Billing-gate* Word, and of all Scolding and Nick-names does most deserve the Ducking-stool. One General Council against another, one Pope cursing his Predecessor, and fetching his very Bones out of the Grave, to burn them for Hereticks Bones, or drown'd them in Tiber, as was Pope *Formosus's* Bones by his Successor Pope Stephen VII, but Pope

Romans that succeeded *Stephen*, condemn'd and curs'd the said Persecutor of Pope *Formosus*, and *sopt* his Bones too in the same River *Tiber*. O the virulency of Sacerdotal Rage! Let me rather, with *St. Paul*, encounter with Beasts at *Ephesus*, than Ecclesiastick Brutes and bloody Priests. The *Arrian* Synods and Councils condemn'd all the *Ortodox* or *Athanasian* Synods and Councils; and vice versa, the *Athanasian* Creedmen did Curse and Damn (as at this day) the *Arrian* or *Socinian* for Heresy: And the Jayl-doors are open, at this day, and the Jaylor ready to take in all *Socinians*, or other Sects, though they be in the truth, if he be excommunicated for Heresy, by the little Surrogate, that knows not what Heresy is; nor any Church of England Doctor did ever, as yet, give a true definition of Heresy in Print, according as *St. Paul* and Holy Writ defines the same, in *Tit. 2. 11. Ananiam a se, or, suo iudicio damnatus*, condemn'd of himself, which none can discover but the searcher of Hearts, and that Holy Spirit that discerneth Mens Thoughts, and the deep things of God.

Therefore we never read in Scripture, that any Church did Excommunicate (any body, for any Wickedness or Sin) except the Church of *Corinth*; and they, never but once, tho' they had amongst them Sinners, (that we would be ready to Curse, Excommunicate, and Jayl, to choose) namely, such as denied the Resurrection of the dead; which, Opinion to hold, makes all Faith vain, and all preaching the Gospel vain, *1 Cor. 15. 13, 14.*

Well; but if the Church of *Corinth* did Excommunicate or deliver to Satan the Incestuous Person; why may not every little Congregation, Assembly, or Church Excommunicate for Incest, Adultery, or Fornication, and Heresy, and Usury, and Perjury, as well as did the Church of *Corinth* for Incest only; at least, why may not the Church of England, by Law establish'd, send Men to the Devil, or, deliver them to Satan and the Jayl, and take their Goods, and bury their Bodies there alive, especially being enabled thereunto by virtue of the Statute, *5 Eliz. 23.*

I answer, 1st, That they may deliver Offenders to Satan, by Excommunication, as authentically as the Church of *Corinth* did the Incestuous Person; but neither the Church of *Corinth* did so, nor Church of England, Scotland, or Geneva, have

have any Authority to Curse at this rate, by Excommunication, unless and until they have St. Paul's Spirit of discerning.

Nor did ever any Church Excommunicate any Offender (that we read of in Holy Writ) except this once for Incest; that a Man should have his Father's Wife; whereas, one would think, there were many other sins greater than that; and yet none ordered to be Excommunicated but this Incestuous Person; nor he, neither, excommunicated and delivered to Satan, for the destruction of the Flesh (that must be killing him, if his Flesh be destroyed) that his Spirit might be saved; but, I say, this Excommunication was not administered 'till they had a Warrant, under the Apostle's Hand, to do it, and his Spirit; tho' absent in Body, yet present in Spirit: 1 Cor. 5. 4. gathered or assembled with my Spirit: my Spirit, (mark that.) And 'till you get St. Paul's Spirit you cannot rightly Excommunicate. Never did little Surrogate, nor Lay-Elder, namely, Officials, Commissaries, Vicar-Generals, and Bishops-Chancellors, Excommunicate, that we read of, in Holy Writ, nor any but the Apostles, nor any of the Apostles except Peter and Paul; nor Peter but once, viz. Ananias and Sapphira; nor Paul but twice, viz. the Incestuous Person, and Hymeneus and Alexander, two Blasphemers, tho' wherein the malignity or final Impenitency of that Blasphemy or Incest did consist, we are ignorant and in the dark, and therefore I will stand by it, that no Excommunication ever can, or ever was, (in Holy Writ) in any Church rightly administer'd, without an Apostolical Spirit, the Spirit of discerning Hearts; whether the Sinner was finally Impenitent, and finally killed, by Excommunication, (so and only so, rightly administer'd. Nor had any of the Apostles the Gift of Miracles, or of discerning of Spirits, at all times, and in all Persons.

The Faith of the Person to be healed, or a strong belief, or Imagination was, sometimes at least, a Preliminary Requisite, and help to be cured, Acts 14. 9. Thus St. Paul, before he offered to cure the Cripple, Lame from his Mother's Womb, looked him in the Face stedfastly, and beholding him, and perceiving that he had Faith to be healed, then (and not till then) he said with a loud Voice, Stand upright on thy Feet, and bow.

Oh! a strong Imagination, or a strong Faith (which Philosophers and Men skill'd in abstruse and magical Studies, as-
sert

test to be most pregnant in Children, Old Women, and Fools, I can do wonders; for where Reason is weakest, Imagination is strongest: Reason fills Men full of Doubts and Inquiry, but Imagination is as bold as blind Bayard.

Nay, even in divine Miracles, the Holy Scriptures say, that our Blessed Saviour did not many Miracles in his own Country, and amongst his own Townsmen, that knew him of a Child, and his Father (as was supposed) and Mary, and were offended at him, as thinking him but a Carpenter, and the Son of a Carpenter; and knew his Brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas, and his Sisters, and consequently could not imagine, or had but little Faith, that he could do any great Matters, the Text says, *Mat. 13. 54, 55, 56, 57, 58. He did not many mighty Works there, because of their unbelief.* And when the Father of the dumb Child, that was possessed with a Devil that tore him, 'till he foamed and gnashed with his Teeth, and pined away, and brought him to Christ's Disciples to be cured, which, for want of Faith, they could not cure; the Blessed Jesus undertook the Cure, on condition (tho') that the Man had Faith, or did believe that he was able to cure him, *Mark 9. 23.* Jesus said unto him, *If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.* So, before our Blessed Saviour did go about to raise Lazarus to Life again, after he had been dead four days (and Martha doubted, because the Corps were then corrupted and stunk) *John 11. 39. 40.* Jesus said unto Martha, *Said I not unto thee, that if thou wouldst believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God.* The Gift of Miracles and discerning of Spirits, and killing Men by delivering them to Satan (as Peter did Ananias and Sapphira) was not given to any at all times; nor to any at all in these Times. But some will be apt to say, Why has the Pope and Priests, for the space of many hundreds of Years, frightened all Christendom, even Emperors, Kings, and Princes (by their Thunder of Excommunication) out of their little Wits?

I answer, Because of their little Wit; for if they had had so much Wit as Queen Elizabeth, of famous Memory, they would have been no more frightened out of their little Wits with that Ecclesiastical Bomb of Excommunication, than with a Pot-Gun, or Elder-Gun, or (saving your presence) a Crack-fart,

fact, as that Queen termed the Pope's Excommunications.

The first *Beesm* therefore that Authority must make to sweep the Church, if they will have it clean, and do no Mischief nor Annoyance, must be to *Nail this Canon*, this *Roaring-Meg of Excommunication*, until we have *Apostolical-Men* that *can* (and *none but Apostolical-Men*, and *so gifted can*) *rightly administer* Excommunication; no more than they can deliver from Satan any that are possessed with a Devil, or cure a Cripple, or the Gout; which was a Gift of God, as was the Gift of Tongues, and the Gift of discerning of Spirits, and doing Miracles, but, *now ceased*, for want of Faith.

Which if Men had, tho' never so little, and but as a Grain of Mustard-seed, our Blessed Saviour saith, *they might remove Mountains*; and also deliver Souls, by clusters, to and from the Devil, without Money. But it is an *abominable Nuisance* and an *Annoyance*, of the greatest danger to *Kings and States*, whom the Pope and his Priests have robb'd of the power of keeping the Keys of Heaven and Hell. I mean, if the Princes and States be wise for themselves, they will keep those Keys, at least, *under their Girdle*, lest the angry Priests, upon displeasure, shut them out of the Church, as did that fierce Captain and Bishop St. Ambrose, to the Emperor Theodosius, and would not let him in until the Emperor submitted.

An Inconvenience that all Princes and States are liable unto all Christendom over; at least, all Christendom that I am acquainted with, except the wise States of Holland, who have done great things in Religion, (that did use to plague them so much with their Excommunications, Burnings, Imprisonment, and Inquisition, the Priests Engines of Antichristian-Tyranny and Cruelty; so that now, Religion in Holland, of all other Countries in Christendom, does the least Mischief. A most excellent *Encomium* and Recommendation, and where, in all Christendom, to be be parallel'd? An incomparable *Panegyrick*! How happy then would the rest of the United Provinces be, to what now they are, if they could but escape, and be deliver'd, as St. Paul was, from the Mouth of the Lion, or *Romish Cruelty* and Slavery? That Lion was bloody Nero at Rome; and what better are his bloody Successors at Rome, the Popes and Popish, and Popish-like Priests, who, like the Devil, (as if, instead of Divines, they were Devils.

Devils Incarnate) going about, as the Scripture saith, like a roaring Lyon (with their roaring Bulls of Excommunication, and, at the Tail of it, the Writs *Heretico Comburendo*, and *de Excommunicato Capiendo*) seeking whom they may devour, except they cool their Rage with Money, Money.

If they are displeas'd at a Prince, at a Lord of Parliament, or an Honourable Member of the House of Commons, they have Law enough on their side, now at this day, and as the Law now stands unrepealed, to send any of them, or all of them, to the Devil, by Excommunication, and to the Jail, by the Writ *de Excommunicato Capiendo*, for Heresy, by virtue of the said 5 Eliz. 23. Though they assert nothing but plain Scripture, as I can Instance in many particulars.

To name but one, namely, John 14. 28. My father is greater than I: the plain and express words of our Blessed Saviour, asserting, That Almighty God, his Father, is greater than He.

If I were a little Surrogate, Perching upon Bench Ecclesiastical, and had the fierceness of an angry and pettish Priest, I could find Law in England, and in the Church established by Law, to send the best Man in England to the Devil, as they say, by Excommunication, and then consequently, his Goods and Liberties being forfeited, bury him alive in a Jail, till he die there, or recant that wicked Error, that God the Father is greater than Christ, tho' Christ says so, expressly. Who can be safe if those Edge-Tools Ecclesiastical be not blunted, and their Canons Nailed, and their Bombs Ecclesiastical exploded or made ridiculous?

But it may be objected to me very readily, How do I prove these my words?

How? do you say? I'll tell you, I will prove them by a famous Queen and Parliament, 1 Eliz. 1. and 5 Eliz. 23.

In 1 Eliz. 1. That Statute is so wise as to tell us, more than I yet knew in all my Reading and Travels, who is an English Heretick, and what is Heresy, in the Realm and Church of England by Law established; who had, after they had that Queen's Commission, which is now cancel'd by Act of Parliament; and if they have any other legal Authority, which some hope they have not, but they think they have, Power and Authority to order, determine, and adjudge any Opinion

nion

mine or saying to be *Heresy*, so that it be only such as hitherto
 have been determined, ordered, or adjudged to be
Heresy, by the Authority of Canonical Scriptures, or by the
 first *Four General Councils*, or any of them, or by any other Ge-
 neral Council wherein the same was declared *Heresy* by the
 express and plain words of the said Canonical Scriptures, or such
 as hereafter shall be ordered, judged, or determined to be
Heresy by the High Court of Parliament of this Realm, with
 the assent of the Clergy in their Convocations and Parliaments to
 Here is a large scope and Field to hunt down a *Heretic* at
 this day, and send him to the Devil by Excommunication,
 and by Gods to the Sheriff and his Bumbayliffe, and his Body
 to the Jayl, till he die there, unless he recant and revoke,
 and do Penance for that wicked Saying or Opinion, that Al-
 mighty God the Father is greater than Christ his Son, tho' Christ's
 own words; because it is expressly against the *Nicene Creed*
 and first General Council there, and against the Creed of
Athanasius most expressly, That the whole Three Persons are
 coeternal and coequal, and he that will be saved must thus think
 of the Trinity, and that this is the Catholick Faith, which
 except a Man believe faithfully, he cannot be saved, faith A-
 thanasius, and, consequently, so says the Parliament by their
 Acts of Uniformity; but Christ says otherwise.
 The People of England are in a fine pickle, either not to
 say as Christ says, or else be sent to the Devil and the Jayl
 by Law established.
 All this is faithfully true by Act of Parliament, the Act for
 Uniformity of Common Prayer and other Rites and Ceremonies;
 and one, even the first, was made (the Act says expressly,
 even the Mass) by the Aid of the Holy Ghost; which if any
 dare deny, he is to be deliver'd to the Devil, and the Turn-
 key, the Jaylor.
 A *Heretic* then he must be by Law of Church of England,
 by Law established, that says, as our Saviour does, that
 Almighty God the Father is greater than Christ his Son, be-
 cause *Athanasius* says, they are equal, and none greater son
 left than other.
 Oh! the Mischief and Blood occasion'd between the Ho-
 monians and Homosians, the Orthodox, as we call them, and
 the *Unitians*, now called *Socinians*.

All Christendom was deluged in Blood, Rapine, and Plunder, about Words, Words and Expressions that hot-headed Men made, and so dissimilit from one another, because not content with God's Words and Scripture Phrases, they must be wiser than the great and omniscient God, and wiser than the Apostle Paul, who treating of the Divinity of our Blessed Saviour in 1 Tim. 3. 16. and of that great Truth, *The Incarnation of God*, he ushers it in with an Introduction suitable to the difficulty of understanding it (for how can finite Creatures fathom Infinity, and the Motions thereof, it being more impossible than to run up, or crowd all the Ocean in a Nutshell) in 1 Tim. 3. 16. *Without Controversy, great is the Mystery of Godliness, God manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of Angels, &c.*

A Mystery is a Mist, a Fog, a Cloud, hardly seen, whether we derive the Greek words, which St. Paul uses there, from the Hebrew *אֲסֵת* *Aseth*, *ascendere*, to hide; or *אֲסֵת* *Aseth* from shutting up the Mouth, not gaping and mouth-ing, as did the General Councils, Pro and Con, with Words and Expressions coming out of Athanasius's Mouth, not Christ's Mouth, nor St. Paul's Mouth, yet agreeing in Substance, and both true, *sans sensu*; and in Scripture sense, that Christ is one with his Father, as Christ says, *as thou Father art in me, and I in thee*, that they also may be one with us. As if St. Paul should have said, that God manifest in the flesh is an hidden Secret, not to be disputed and argued Pro and Con, much less to be disputed with Bow and Arrows, Clabs and Swords, as was in the Third and Fourth Centuries: Sometimes the *Arrians* prevailing, and poor Athanasius banish'd, when Constantine, Constans, and Constantius were Emperors, and the *Arian* Bishop Eusebius, Constantine's Chaplain, Favourite, and Historyographer, and writ his Life, and *Acts*, and *Church-History*, gained the Ascendant, and the Popes of Rome also being *Arrians* sometimes.

But when the Infallible Chair changed its Note, and turn'd Orthodox, then woe be to the *Arrians* and *Sorinians*, Hereticks all, and worse than Mahomet, burn them, hang them, and break their Bones, shed their Marrow, rack them on the Wheel, as now in France are all but *Papists*, tho' France is friendly, and in a close League with the *Mahometans* or *Turks*, but

but a *Heretick*, that will not be converted, by being beaten into it, like Dogs and Spaniels, knock out their Brains, rip up their Bowels, and torment them for *Heresy*, says Holy Church of *Rome*: And indeed all *keen Ecclesiasticks* and Churches, that I know, against all *Dissenters*, if they had Power equal to their Malice and *Blood-shedding*, except the established Church of *Holland*, and of late the Church of *England*; to the regret of some *hot-headed Bigots*, who gnash the Teeth at *Toleration*, and grin as if the Devil were in them, tempting them to Blood and Wounds of those that they *Billinggate* with that scolding Nick-name, *Heretick*, *Heretick*, tof to and fro and bandied like a Tennis-Ball; and not a Church of them all, National or Congregational has, to this day, in Print, defin'd, truly, what *Heresy* is, as the Holy Scripture does define it in *Titus 3. 11.* namely, *Autumnatus a seipso*, or *sua judicio condemnatus*; condemned by himself and his own Judgment; he himself being the Judge thereof, and tho' no other Judge do condemn him, saith *Erasmus* upon that Text, *Tit. 3. 11. Damatus, etiamsi nemo Judex de illo pronuntiet.*

By this Rule all Christian Churches and Parliaments, and Legislators ought to be ruled and over-ruled, and not give Power and Authority to every hot-headed or spit-fire Church or Priest, to be Cannibals, and devour their own kind, and take delight in killing Men that do not think and believe as they do; as if every Man had a Pope in his Belly, or sat in the Infallible Chair: At this rate there can never be Peace, but everlasting Destruction, Blood-shed and War. As if Christ came not to send Peace on Earth, but a Sword; Father and Mother, Sister and Brother, all hating one another, and all together by the Ears; for what?

For difference in Opinions about Religion and Religious Worship, every one would have uniformity in his own way, Mode and Figure in Religion.

Oh! most senseless, impossible and wicked Design, and the bane of the Peace of Christendom in all Ages and Nations thereof: Whereas, in truth, God and Nature seems to delight in variety, at that infinite rate, that there is scarce any Man or Woman, any Thing or Creature that God has made uniform or alike; not so much as two Twins or two Eggs alike: or two Faces exactly alike in all the Universe:

And yet, senseless Politicians, and more eager and senseless Priests, would have all like themselves, or if they differ or dissent, Curse them, Jail them, Burn them, as of old.

And all this Mischief comes from a vulgar Error, that the Pope and his Priests, and Popish-like Priests have imbib'd, and their silly People imbib'd, that there can be no *Unity* without *Uniformity*.

Horrid Nonsense, and the bane of Christendom! Can not Fathers and Mothers, Brothers and Sisters love one another, and be at *Unity*, tho' not any two of them are *uniform*, or of *one Size, Figure, Shape, Ayre, Mien, or Dimensions*. So we do but agree in *one Faith, one Baptism*, in plain Scriptures, what harm is in *Circumstantial* there be difference or dissent.

Where does God or Christ in all the Scriptures command *one Discipline*, or *one Hierarchy* in the Church, or rather, not expressly, *Luke 22, 26. 1 Pet. 5, 3.* forbid the latter, so much contended for, *Tooth and Nail, Lord Bishop, forsooth*. The Apostle Paul, surely, does not, in *Complement*, call the Church of *Corinth*, Saints, and sanctified in Christ Jesus, and who were, in every thing, enriched by God in all Utterance and all Knowledge, *1 Cor. 1, 2, 4, 7.*

And yet neither God, nor his Spirit in St. Paul, did instruct them to *Excommunicate one another*, as *Schismatics* and *Hereticks*, and bid, *take them Devil, take them Faylor*.

And yet there were great *Schisms* and *Divisions*, and *Dissensions* amongst them, and *Contentions* about Religion, *1 Cor. 1, 11.* some denying the Fundamentals (the great Fundamental of Christian Religion) the *Resurrection of the Dead*.

Yet St. Paul does not, as our little unthinking Scriblers, that write and treat of *Schism*, cry out, *curse them, damn them* to the Pit of Hell and the Jail, nor so much as *reject*, or avoid their Company; those that did not only deny the Blessed Jesus to be Christ, the Messiah and Son of God, but also murdered him, Christ does not curse them, but prays for them to God, *Father forgive them, they know not what they do.*

If therefore the Legislators do not imitate our Blessed Saviour in Meekness and Mercy, but make Rods for the Priests

Priests to Whip, and Scourge, and Slash all that dislike them; let them take heed that these Rods, and the smart thereof do not fall upon their own Backs sorely, and heavily. Oho undinking Politicians; especially when some High-flyers are so keen, strong, and rampant as in Point, uncontroul'd to stir up the *Sacerdotalis*, or *Pontificalis*, above the *Regale*. This is High-Treason against Holy Scripture expressly; *Rom. 13.* against the fundamental Laws of England; and setting up that Man of Sin, or Antichrist in the Temple of God; *upon all that is called God, the Magistrate.*

The *Wretches* durst not be so daring, but for two Reasons: 1st, No doubt but they have as strong, as secret Backers and Upholders. 2^{ly}, Because they have escaped *Imprisonment* hitherto, notwithstanding their Blasphemies from the Pulpit, or speaking Evil of Dignities; particularly and by Name exposed in that notable Book called, *The Politicks of High-Church.*

If these *High-flyers* and *Memorial-Men* be thus, as hitherto, conniv'd at, and not call'd to Account, Her Majesty's Government, by Her Assisting Parliaments, and Laws fundamental, will be made very tottering and precarious, on every *Shake, Revolution, or untold Accident.*

The first *Beesons* then must be made to sweep the Church of this thing called *Excommunication*, a Godly Ordinance when rightly *Administer'd* by an Apostolical Spirit of discerning the Heart of an Heretick, namely, that his own Conscience condemns his own Tenets, and also discerning in the Heart final Impenitency, and also that Death is the consequent of that *delivering to Satan.*

You'll say, Yes; the latter has been the consequence of Excommunication in England, when the silly Bigot-Magistrates *Languish'd* after the Priests, and was their *Fach-Ketch*, as now also in England by the Writ *de Excommunicato Capiendo*, a very honourable Employ for grave Magistrates, who also burn them, and rack them on the Wheel (vile Hereticks against Priest-craft!) in Rome, Spain, France, &c.

Secondly, Then with the *Prerogative of State* cleanse the Church and State of this Writ *de Excommunicato Capiendo*, that has done such Mischief, and never any Good. But how, when, in what manner or Method it becomes not me to Point at, I leave it to the Wisdom of the Civil State.

maris

Only

Only this *Beefarm* must not be over-long in making, for shame; and not only for Speech of People, but in Christian Compassion and Bowels of Mercy, that cannot but yearn (as *Joseph* did to his Brethren) if they be Men and Christians, to see so many of Her Majesty's Subjects undone, Body and Goods, when the Priests and the Registers take a Pique, or vent their Malice against a Dissenter, or be not paid all their greedy Expectations and Extortions. And, which is a shame, they have the *Law on their side* for these Matters: Are our Legislators asleep, that are so vigilant about regulating the Administration of the Law in the State-Civil, and leave the *State-Ecclesiastical* more *rattled* and forlorn, than *Paul's* the high material *Mother-Church of England*.

Get a Whip of small Cords (as our Saviour did) and lash these Buyers and Sellers of Souls out of the Temple and Church of God.

But I must encounter one Objection, if I have not done it, more than sufficiently and most abundantly already, namely, That in taking away Excommunication, and the Writ de Excommunicato Capiendo you Act against Christ's express Commission to his Twelve Apostles, Go, and whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, shall be bound in Heaven, &c.

First, I answer, What is this to that Popishly Invented, and Priestly malicious Writ, obtain'd in Popish Times, when Priests were rampant, and Kings and Parliaments as Priest-ridden as poor King *John*?

Secondly, I answer, As to Excommunication, there is less to justify it, than that Engine of Sacerdotal Tyranny and Slavery, the Writ de Excommunicato Capiendo.

I never yet met with a wise, prudent, and thinking Man that ever quarrel'd or took Exceptions against that Epithet (which is as natural and deserved as) commonly given to this *silly, silly, silly* World.

If People were not out of their little Wits, could they be perswaded that Christ's breathing upon his 12 Apostles reach'd from *Judea* to *Rome*, and farther, even to above twice as many English and Welsh Bishops 1700 years after, whilst they were Popish Bishops, or Popish-like Lord Bishops, except he can Prove that these Twelve Apostles, were all of them

them Twelve Lords; and if they were, Twelve Lord Bishops, one of these Lord Bishops was a Devil; if you believe our Saviour, and make him our guilty of *Scandalum magnatum*, John 6. 70. compared with Mat. 18. 18.

But Christ after his Resurrection breathed upon the Twelve Apostles. I answer, I do not believe it, for there was but Eleven of them, Lord Bishop Judas had hang'd himself, when Christ breathed upon the Apostles, and Matthias was not chosen, John 20. 22. 23.

Nay, what if there were as many Apostles, as the Pope of Rome has Cardinals, and Bishops, and Priests, and Fryars, Gray-Fryars, and Black-Fryars; not a Man of them born when Christ breathed on the Eleven Apostles; or if they were then alive, prove that Christ's Breath reached from Jerusalem to Rome, France, or Ireland; or, else you quote Holy Writ most Impertinently.

Obj. Mat. 28. 20. And Lo I am with you always, even unto the end of the World: but the original is *ecce ego vobiscum*. I am with you every day to your last day, or to the end of your Age, or till you dye.

Except Priests be Athiests, and care not how they Wyredraw and Stretch and Rack, Holy Scriptures, to make them speak and confess what they never meant, I know not how this Promise Reaches any Christian, much less, any Lordly or domineering Priests more then (nor so much then) as 2 Chron. 15. 2. The Lord is with you whilst you be with him.

But, (does not what there follows also belong to you, you Prating, Lordly, Domineering, Covetous, Ambitious, Tyrannical and cruel Priests) — If you forsake him he will forsake you.

As for Example, a Tradesman (I know many where I live) that casts a Leering, Covetous *Abad's* Eye upon some fat Ecclesiastical Vineyard, and having a Son to provide for (now that the Wool-Trade is too much (God wor) at an Ebb, the good Wool-comber (the Father) standing in a Brown-study, and in Equilibrio, Haberdupoys, whether for a Penny to make his Son Free of the Wool-Trade or the Pulpit; at length, the good Glebe and Tyches of such a Living (that he has in his Eye, and can readily buy) the first Presentation, away, he send his Son to the University, or Doctors.

Doctors-Commons, to be qualified to bind and loose Souls bind him to Hell, or let them loose to Heaven (even as Mr. Wool-Comber's Son shall please, I mean,) after he is ordain'd Deacon and Priest, according to the Act of Parliament for ordering, or ordaining Bishops, Priests and Deacons.

Ay, Ay! There is his Commission. Who Sign'd and Seal'd that Commission? Did Christ, or God? No, no, we are not so Impudent and Brazen-fac'd, because there is no proof, Signs nor Probability thereof, more than when he was a Wool-comber! Except that he has learnt (at the University) to chop Logick, and to cant as unjustifiably, and to as little purpose, as a Gypsy.

Come, come; What signifies a little flatter in this World, though you have got a good Benefice or Bishoprick by the Interest of Friends, or Money; or Kings Mules, or Popish Priests, in the Reign of some late Kings in our times: How then, *In nomine Domini*, and with what face do they pretend a divine Inspiration, an Indelible Character, or any Divinity or breathing of Christ, more than when Holsters and Pistols did preface their Saddles, or, the Comb-pots greazed their Confirming Palms or Finger's-ends. But,

Si vulgus vult decipi, decipiatur.

I scorn to say more to this nonsensical Imposition upon the Understanding and Wit of the Lavery, if they have any.

Has not Antichrist reigned a thousand Years? Has not the *Pontifex*, nuzled and befool'd the *Regale*, these thousand years, will not the Spirit of Christ enliven some Legislators in Christendom, as well as those in *Holland*, to pull down the *M. n. of Sin*, out of the Temple of God, or Church of God? It *must*, it *will*, it *shall* be done; Oh! Foolish Bigots, and unwise.

Good God! Gracious and Merciful! Didst thou ever send a Heavenly Thunderbolt to be ruled or guided by any mortal Arm (furious, silly and rash) without the divine Aid of thine Holy Arm and Spirit? visible and easily to be known and distinguished from Self-Interest, Cruelty, *Avarice* and Ambition.

ambition

bidon of *Popes* and *Priests*, *Malice* and *Sycophantry* of *Court-Chaplains* &c.

Like the *Sycophantry* of those *Canons* of *Lambeth*, that *Lay'd Taxes* upon the *Clergy* without a *Parliament*, or that first *Synod* of *King James I.* Anno 1603. *Canon 2d.* and *Canon 139.* wherein the *Clergy*, like *Faux*, with his *Dark-Lantern*, attempted to blow up the *Parliament* and the *Parliament-House* for ever, and make no *Laws*, but at *White-Hall* and the *Banqueting-House*, or at *Doctors-Commons*.

Then, *farewel Magna Charta*, call it, as an *Usurper* once did, *Magna f—ta*; *farewel*, *Statute-books*, and the *Common-law*, and *Municipal-laws* of *England*; which our *Ancestors* to the death vindicated to us their *Posterity*: Saying, *Nolumus leges Angliæ mutari.*

And let us (even) get *Wooden-shoes*, and trudge to *France*, to *tyranny*, and like *Priest-ridden-slaves*, expose our backs (like *King Henry II.*) to the *Priest's-rods* and *Scourges*, for daring to oppose the *Sacerdotal*; setting up (most confidently and to his smart) the *Regale*, above the *Pontificale*, and *Lord Bishop Thomas of Becket*; and his *Crown* above the *Mytre*, or *Christ*, and *Rom. 13. 1.* above *Antichrist*.

And yet, the famous *Lord Chancellor Fortescue*, (in his *Book De laudibus Legum Angliæ*, *Cap. 53.* page 129. tells the *Prince of Wales*, That the *Laws* of this *Realm* of *England* restrain'd the *King* that he could not *Tyrannize*.

Here was *true Loyalty* (or which was all one) *Legality*: Nevertheless, make Room (or *Rome*) for *Archbishop Laud's* *Chaplin*, *Dr. Heylin*; who (in his *Ancidote* page 66. asserts, for good *Law* and *Gospel*, that *Laws* published by the *King* alone, without *Consent* of *Parliament*, are binding, and the *People*, may be compelled to obey them.

Ay, but lest some should say, beloved, There is an Oath in the *Case*, the *King's Coronation Oath*.

Well, suppose there be two; what then? Why then, says *Filmer*, (in his *power of Kings*) Printed 1680. Page 2. Notwithstanding all Oaths, the *Prince* may derogate from the *Laws*, frustrate or disannul the same: Is it not the greatest *High-Treason* to infuse *Poyson* into the *King's Ears*; and *Poyson* of that *Virulent* and most pernicious *Venom* and *Malignity* as to ruin both the *King* and *Kingdom*?

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Or,

Or, Are we all asleep, a *dead Sleep*? or love to be in the *Mode*, (the *French-Mode*) to be Priest-ridden Beggars and wear *wooden Shoes*? then there's an end on it.

If AAs of Parliament are but *humane Inventions and Institutions*, then that Act for ordering or ordaining Bishops, Priests, and Deacons is but an *humane Institution, Order, or Ordaining*.

Are Men so impudent then as to deny their Maker and Creator? It was *Lucifer's Sin and Fall*, and it is the *Sin of Antichrist*, and all *Antichristian Attempts*, and will be their *Fall*, to make themselves equal to, if not above their Maker. Cannot Men be content to Prate, or rather, Preach and Beg with Tears in their Eyes, as did *St. Paul*, praying Men to be reconciled to God, and be well paid for their Pains, with good Benefices, Lordly Mannors, and Honours, *Prebendaries, Corps*, and fat Glebes, but they must *Hector* their Makers and Benefactors? Oh! *Luciferian Pride and Antichristian Ingratitude*, like that of the *Popes to Emperors and Kings*, their Makers, Electors, (*Conse de l'Etat*) Benefactors, Patrons, and Ordainers, or Consecrators?

In fine, Mark the vast difference betwixt the Church of Christ (built and kept in repair by *humble Pastors and Teachers* for the Work of the Ministry) and the *High and Lordly Church of Antichrist*, erected and maintain'd, with Blood and Wounds and Persecution, called, *The Gates of Hell*, which shall not prevail against the humble and low-built Church of Christ, who was meek and lowly. This *High-roy'd Church of Antichrist* was erected, like the *Tower of Babel*, so High as to *Mate Heaven and God*, and all that is called *God*, (the *Magistrate*) telling Lyes in Hypocrisy; saying, that it's Priests can make a God; that's one great Lye and Nonsense: And the Priest can eat up a whole God; nay, twenty or a *Hundred*, that's another Lye.

And that therefore the Priest's Person is so sacred, that it is Sacrilege to lay violent Hands on him; much more, Sacrilege to hang him, though he has murder'd your Father, or Prince; that's another Lye.

And, that he is made Divine by Orders, (a Sacrament of the *Pope's making*, and *Popish-like Bishop making*) not of *God's making*; for none ought to be Ordain'd by Men, but such whom God's Holy Spirit has first made Divine; otherwise the

the Priest is but a *Judas*, not a true Disciple of Christ, therefore Self-Interest and Ambition taught the Priests and foolish Bigots this Eye.

And, That all Orders give a sacred and indelible Character; that's another Eye.

And, that all Priests that have this Character, or are Ordain'd according to the Rites and Ceremonies order'd by Act of Parliament, are the Porters of Hell-Gates, or the Turn-keys there; and of Heaven-Gates too. Here's a whole army of Porters and Turn-keys for poor Men and Princes to stand in awe of, and pay them well too, to make them quiet and civil.

And, That when they have given the Devil Livery and Seisin of a Soul for Heresy (and every thing they make Heresy that shows their Pride, Avarice, and Cruelty) That Soul can never get out of the Devil and the Taylors clutches, till the Angry Priest be pleas'd and paid, (more's the pity.) O Devilish Merchandize of Sins and Souls!

How long, Lord! How long shall this Antichristian Tyranny and Cruelty be permitted to rage and vex a silly bigotted World, gull'd, sham'd and beguil'd with Ecclesiastick Nonsense and Sacerdotal Impudence, and Pride, Envy, Hatred and Malice, and all Uncharitableness?

From which (our Lerany should be) Good Lord deliver us! and put it into the Hearts of Grave, Learned, Pious, and Prudent, Honest, and Wise Magistrates (that must answer for it to the great Judge of Heaven and Earth, to be nursing Fathers and nursing Mothers to Christ's true Church and Members, if they want Bowels of Mercy that can, but will not deliver us, and consequently, themselves and Posterities from Sacerdotal, but Antichristian Rage and Cruelty.

Let the Magistrates be (if it must be) like Nebuchadnezzar to Daniel, suffer us to be cast into the Den of Lions, or to fight with Beasts, like St. Paul at Ephesus, rather than stand still, (not only gaping, but looking on, whilst raging Priests deliver us first to the Devil, and then they rage to execute the Revenge of Priests, that laugh in their sleeves at the easy Bigots, and all this vouch'd by Law. And that no Church of Christ (of Antichrist they should say) can subsist without a Pope and many Cardinals, at least, not without Lordly and dominating Bishops or Apostolical Men, to be the Pillars thereof, and

and support its Frame. Whereas, on the contrary, there was not one Lord Bishop amongst the Twelve Apostles, nor High-flyer, except, perhaps, Lord Judas, when he hang'd himself fluttering in the Air. So that's another Antichristian Lye.

For, of all the Gifts that Christ gave his Church, some Apostles, some Prophets, some Evangelists, some Pastors and Teachers, Eph. 4. 11, 12. Christ has thought fit and needful to continue in the Church, only Pastors and Teachers; for the Work of the Ministry, for the perfecting of the Saints, and for the edifying of the Body of Christ.

But for Lord Bishops here in England, they are of Man's making, by Act of Parliament. I meddle no further with them now, but to pray to God to bless me, and keep me out of Harm's way, if I happen to stand in the way of an angry or angered Priest.

But, some may say, why should any Man think, that Priests of all sorts, whether Protestant or Popish Priests, are more touchy, when touch'd, than all other Folks.

I answer, first, that Experience, in all Ages, and in all Nations tells us so.

And secondly, The Reason also thereof is plain and evident; for though, here and there, some Priests are wiser, yet, generally speaking, the most of them, of what Sect soever, have imbib'd that vulgar Error, that by their Ordination they are Divinely Inspir'd, and made Divines, as they call themselves, and as their silly Bigots and Adorers believe, kneeling to them, as they do to the Bishop of Rome, his Holiness, or to the sanctity of Lord Bishop, most devoutly begging their Benediction on bended Knee, being, forsooth, not only Lords, but Divine Lords, with an high and distinguishing Emphasis, from and above Lay Lords, and the Laity; Lords Spiritual, as being filled (if they do not Lye to the Holy Ghost) with some Spirit, (I know not what, nor they neither) or Indelible Character and Authority, empower'd by God's Breath or Spirit to bind and loose, to pardon or damn Sinners, to curse them and bless them. Or else why do Coxcombs kneel to them for their Benedictions?

I know that Men deriv'd this Whimsey from Popery, from his Holiness, forsooth, the Popes of Rome and his Cardinals, Bishops, and other proud Priests: Otherwise, why does whole

whole Streets of silly Bigots fall down on their Knees, when a Cardinal or Bishop *rides by* in State, like my Lord Mayor, not on an Ass, meekly, or the Foal of an Ass, and humbly, like our Saviour, but sneering, and jeering, and smiling to themselves at the Religious or Superstitious Folly of the Pops. As the Pope did when two Kings strove together who should first hold his Stirrup and kiss his Toe.

By Nature (congenial with us, and inherent in us till we dye) every Man finds in himself the truth of that old Proverb,

facile erudimur quæ volumus.

Any Story, any News, true or false, is the more greedily swallow'd and believ'd, if it please our Palates and arride our Appetites.

But it is a very relishing Bit to a little Tantivy-Priest, that learnt to be proud ever since he was Capt by the Scholars and College-Servants, as Master or Fellow of a College, that really he expects like Adoration and Respect when he is out of the College-Walls. *Within which* he is a Fellow, forsooth, and *without which* he has no fellow, till a rough Fellow happen to abate his Pride and Insolence, by kicking him into better Manners.

But then, when advanc'd higher, to be a Porter, like Cerberus, at Hell-Gates, and Turn-key there too, and also of Heaven-Gates, by entering into Priests-Orders, he fancies himself to be no small Cock-sod, and nearer Heaven, or taller by the Head and Shoulders than other Folks, though Kings, Princes, and the greatest Ministers of State.

O insufferable Insolence! This Spiritual and Ecclesiastick Pride is not deriv'd from Christ or his Apostles, nor Holy Scripture; but from the Popish Principles and Church of Antichrist; which Pride shall have a fall.

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The Conclusion.

By the Premises it is undeniably true,
 1. That Excommunication cannot be, nor ever was,
 rightly Administer'd without St. Paul's Spirit, or the Spirit
 of discerning, who is in or out of the Truth, who is, and is
 not finally Impenitent, and also that the same kill and destroy
 the outward Man, or his Body, that his Soul or Spirit might
 be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

Which Execution upon the Sinners, because the Pope and
 his Priests wanted the said Apostolical Gift that Peter had of
 killing Ananias and Sapphira with his Crack-farts (for St. Peter's
 Ape and pretended Successor would be imitating and his
Mimick) what should Infallibility do? Oh! he bethought
 himself of the old Proverb,

Stultorum plena sunt omnia.

Every Corner now is full of Fools,
 And therefore fit to be the Priest's (keen) Tools.

Almost out of their little Wits for Joy were Bigot Princes,
 Sheriffs and Bayliffs, and run, like mad, to make Bonfires
 (in Smithfield and other places) to burn a poor Man to Ashes,
 as soon as the Priests had deliver'd them first to Satan, and
 in the next place to the Hang-men, to consume them with
 Torments, tho' the Priests always then most hypocritically
 (to God and Man) and without Grace or Blushing beg'd of
 the silly Magistrate to be merciful.

But the Magistrate was not so silly as to believe their
 words; for that he knew it was all Hypocrisy and Dissimu-
 lation, and they meant quite contrary to their words.

2dly, It is undeniably evident, that no Flesh alive, nor any
 Church militant here upon Earth, can know whether a
 Dissenter be a Heretick, except they can, by the Spirit of
 God, search into the Hearts of Men, and consequently
 then, and only then, discern, that he condemns himself by his own

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Conscience and Judgement for the Tenets he holds. Except any be so Atheistically impudent as to deny the plain words of Holy Scripture, *Tn. 3. 10. 11.* Then how can any Christian Prince or Parliament answer it at God's Tribunal, to burn a Heretic, by virtue, or rather vice, of the Writ *de Heretico Comburendo*; or take Mens Goods and Liberties from them by burying them alive in a Jayl, by the Writ *de Excommunicato Capiendo*, now used, and (the use or abuse) warranted by Statute-Law.

And lastly, It is high time to *Quere* whether Ecclesiasticks incur not a *Premunure*, or some other Penalty, for daring to cite Her Majesty's Subjects into their Courts, to be there Sentenced, Fleeced, and Excommunicated, and consequently Jayled and Impoverished (especially in these hard Times of ebbing Trade and War) in their own Names, and under their own Seals, and not made in the Name and Style of the King, as it is in Writs Original and Judicial at the Common Law, and not, I say, in their own Names, and in such form and manner as was used in the time of the usurped Power of the Bishop of Rome, the very words of the Statute, *1 Edw. 6. 1.* Which Statute, and the reason of that Statute, namely, making void the usurped Power of the Bishop of Rome, or any such like usurped Power over Kings and Princes seems to be in force as much now as ever; as is more fully proved by a more dextrous Hand than this of mine.

If Self-Interest could sway me, I would be an Advocate for Spiritual Courts and Bishop Courts; or if I could prove their Lawfulness from God or Man: At least, from any Man but the Pope of Rome, from whose usurped Power their Modes of Ecclesiastical Court-keeping is derived, if we believe the said Statute, *1 Edw. 6. 2.*

From God or Christ, Holy Scripture, or Christ's Apostles, either by Example or Precepts; for such Courts Ecclesiastical and Modes of Punishment of Offenders, Persons contumacious *thraunto*, by delivering them to Satan and the Jayl, there is not one Bishop or Priest, either Protestant or Popish, ever yet had the Forehead and Front to affirm: For the Popish Priests are not ashamed to confess, but do unanimously, and without Blushing, derive their Spiritual Courts from Man. But he is such a Man, as they call him, *Deus alter in Terra*; a

God,

God, not of Heaven, but of Earth, and Hell, and Purgatory: There this God, or rather *Atheist* they hold, has large Territories and Dominions.

If therefore there be any Christian Government, (except *Holland*) that is not still intoxicated with the Cup of Fornication, as the Scripture terms it, by the *Whore of Babylon*, they must sweep away this Mock-Gift of Excommunication, or delivering Sinners to Satan, 'till some Priest or other be able to show, by some Signs, Evidence, Tokens, or Proof, that this Gift is really a Gift of Christ's Breath or Holy Spirit, as apparent as in *Peter*, when he kill'd the finally Impenitent *Ananias* and *Sapphira*, and make it appear, that they, like God, know Mens Hearts, whether their Repentance be sincere or hypocritical, and whether the Heretick they deliver to the Devil be a Heretick, such as Holy Writ describes to be *subverted*, and also *condemned by himself*, and in his own Conscience and Judgment, which none knows, but he that is the *only searcher*, and therefore the *only Judge* of Hearts.

Yet I would speak one good word, at length, for these *Spiritual-Courts*, if any Man alive can tell me one good thing they do, or ever did, or what they are good for, except that abominable Merchandize of Sins and Souls, to be a good thing; and making Church-Wardens to swear an Oath, which they know it is impossible for any Man alive to keep or observe, namely, to present all Offenders against the Laws Ecclesiastical, when no Man alive is able to tell, nor they themselves, which *Canons* are *Laws in force* and which not.

The Government is wise enough to prohibit *French Commodities*, why then is there not a Prohibition of this *Romish Merchandize* of selling Sins and Souls, like *Slaves of Antichrist*, and to be hooted out of *Christendom*, as well as out of *Holland*.

This Annoyance or Relict, or Reliques of Popery and Antichrist must be swept out of the Church, if you will keep it sweet and clean; as you ought to do, as you will answer it to the God that gave you Power and Authority in the Church and over the Church, if it be not an *Antichristian* or *Pontifical* Church above the *Regis*.

But

But if this will not be done, at least put it home to the Consciences of every Priest that pretends he has Power to bind and loose, to remit and retain Sins, and to open Heaven-Gates and Hell-Gates, ask him this single Question; *Priest! Believest thou this?* If he say he does believe that he has such a Gift, and can show no more Signs, Evidence, Token, or Proof thereof, than any Porter can, when he Curses and bids the Devil take Men; then it follows necessarily, that the Priest himself knows it all to be Mockery, Mummery, Antichristian, and Popish Gullery, Fancy, and Sham in himself and other Priests, that laugh in their Sleeves, perhaps, when they deliver a Soul to the Devil; as, *Cicero* says, the cheating Augurs did, when they saw one another watch and leer, gape and spy, and *invenit*, oversee the silly Birds, how, when, which, and which way they flew, whilst the poor silly Birds knew nothing of the matter,

Augur Augurem videbit & non ridebit When Augurs look out sharp and lear At flying Birds, who can forbear To laugh outright, or smile and jeer

But if the Priest does really believe and know that he has no more this Gift of delivering Men to the Devil, more than he had when he curs'd them, whilst he was a Lay-man, what greater Sin can there be than to Lye to the Holy Ghost, and know that they do Lye to the Holy Ghost, when they pretend that they have the Gift of discerning of Spirits and searching Hearts, without which no Man can rightly administer Excommunication, or send Men to the Devil to rights, killing them: Whereas there would be no visible ill-consequence of a thousand Deliveries to Satan, if the silly Magistrates (intoxicated as aforesaid) did no more than the angry Priests to *bury Men alive*, that displeases them, in a Jail, till they learn better Manners, and pay faster to the Porter for letting them out, losing them, or *asleeping* them. This is worse than the peevish Nurse, Ochan Whips the Child, then makes it kiss the Rod, and thank you good Nurse

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for

for whipping of me; and thank you Priest for ~~saying~~^{telling} me,
and saying me how much more I have to do.

But let them keep (on) their Spiritual Courts; and also keep them in such manner as was taught them by the late great Patriarch of Rome, and let them curse and deliver to the Devil poor Sinners, till they may be ashamed; so that the Government do but take away that Popishly invented Engine, the Writ de Excommunicato Capiendo; as they have done that *de Heretico Comburendo*; and they may curse till they are hoarse before any good body will heed their impotent, brutum fulmen, or their Cracks; more than the report or attack of a Child's Pe-gging of Elder-gun-villib gods now.

This Pillar, set up by Popish Magistrates, that durst do no other, though they themselves, poor Kings, Princes, and States handseld'd their own Tradition, and suffer'd in their Brazen Bull, like Porillon, which they devised to torment others.

This is all that they got, or will get, that *worship the Beast* (the *Protestant Popish-like Beast*, or *his Image*, or *suffer him to rage*, and devour the People committed to their Charge: even the Mercy of *Polyphemus to Ulysses*, to be the last to be devoured.

Poor King *Charles* has found this to be true in Scotland, when the Kirk made him stand on the Stool of Repentance at *Sebons-church* before they would Crown him there! And if he had not done Penitence then and there, and confess his Sins, and the Sins of his Father's House, the Presbyterian Priests would not absolve him, but have burnt him too, being the offspring of an *Anathema* or *Stout-Cock*, as now, in *England*, the *Merle de Excommunication* is Capable to do all that they have to send that they have to send. At *Delft's* Commend they keep an old super-annuated Priest, or Man in Orders, who being too old to Preach or Pray, his only business is to Curse all those that the *Presbtery* and *Duff* send there have decreed and sentenced to be Excommunicated, or Poor Soul! He knows no more of the Matter than the Bishop himself does, when in course he subscribes the Excommunications and Absolutions sent to him to subscribe, and the significavit thereof, for which he has a greater Fee indeed than the Old-Man, Mr. *Necessity*, so called, because *Necessity* by no Law, he knows either Law Civil nor Uncivil, but

but says, Give me my Six-Pence for subscribing the Curse; and as much for Absolving them, which the Register pays him, as soon as the Sinner has made an Attonement for his Sins and his Soul; that is, as soon as the Sell-Soul-Register is paid his Demands, in full, then, and not till then, Mr. Necessary remits the Sin and absolves the Sinner, and the Bishop confirms it under Hand and Seal, and then, the Temporal Courts, and Judges, Sheriffs and Jaylors give credit to the Absolution; and the Excommunicated Sinner (as soon as can be) after his Money is paid, and all Courts and all Parties except himself, pleased, he is deliver'd out of the Clutches of the Devil and the Jaylor. *Five doings.*

This is worse than the False Prophet Balaam; for when a King would have had him Curse Israel he deny'd it, saying, the King Balaak would give me his House full of Silver and Gold, yet how can I curse whom God hath not cursed: and how can I bless whom the Lord hath not blessed.

King Balaak was not the first King bigotted to believe that whom the False Prophets bless, they are blessed; and whom the False Prophets curse upon Earth, they are accursed in Heaven.

If King John of England, and other Kings and Emperors had not believed this remitting and retaining *Sin* on the Priest's making, at least, if their People had not been given up to such strong Delusions to believe this Lye, they would never have been so bewitch'd or bedevil'd (as King Ahab was bedevil'd by a Lying Spirit, or the Father of Lies the Devil, to believe False Prophets; that he might go and fall at Ramoth-Gilead) as poor King John and his People were bedevil'd to believe, that the Pope and his Priests could damn them, if they did not deliver their Purse, or the whole Kingdom of England, to the Pope, or else be damn'd.

Must not People be strangely bewitch'd, and be given up to strong delusions to believe this Lye (of the Pope and the Priests making) That they all might be damn'd? *Thess. 2. 11. 12.* who believe not the truth, but have pleasure in unrighteousness. If any say, that these are harsh Lines, I say, they may be sham'd to say so, and afraid of God's Judgments, and of all good Mens Sentence and Condemnation, in denying to say that these are harsh Lines, for they are the very words of Holy Men, or Gods Word.

Does not the Father of Lyes, the Evil Spirit, (the Devil he is) that deludes and bewitches Men to believe a Lye, this great Lye and Delusion in particular, that Priests, by virtue of their Ordination, or being in Holy Orders (as they christen it) can Bless and Curse on Earth, and what he blesses is blessed in Heaven, and what he curses is in Heaven and Hell accursed; more than when a Beau or a Hector says, *God damn you, and me too?*

For this is a plain Delusion, even against Mathematical Truth and Demonstration, which says, (and Experience confirms it) That no Stream can naturally mount higher than the Spring or Fountain that makes it, and feeds it, and maintains it. But for Priests to pretend, that their Ordinations or Orders impowers them to make their Curses here on Earth, or at *Doctors-Commons* (by Mr. Necessity, for Six-pence a Curse) and presently then and thence to mount up as high as Heaven, and consequently, whose Sins he retains here, they are retained in Heaven, and whose Sins he remits here, they are remitted there, is to make their Ordinations, the Stream, to mount and rise higher than the Fountain that makes it, feeds it and maintains it, namely, a meer *humane Invention or Institution*, an *Act of Parliament* for rightly Ordaining Bishops, Priests and Deacons.

No rational Man can answer the strength of this Argument, and no good or honest Man will desire to do it, except he be given over, by God, to strong Delusions, that he might believe a Lye, that he might be damn'd for not believing even Mathematical Truths, but has pleasure in Unrighteousness.

My Ingenious Friend, Dr. Elchard, missed his main Mark, when he could not hit upon this great and chief Cause of the Contempt of the Clergy, (the Protestant Clergy, whether Episcopal, Presbyterian, or Independant Clergy) namely, They are so very much more contemptible in the sight of wise and good Men, by *spoiling a great many Truths of God*, by this grand Cheat, Lye and Delusion, Is it not *lying to the Holy Ghost*, as well as unto Men? and a Lye that they would have others believe, but do no more believe it themselves, than does the said Mr. Necessity, who has as much *Jarred Orders* as the best of them, with this only difference, that he is not such a *Whole-sale*

Sub-Man as to Curse whole Kingdoms (as the Pope at Rome does every *Ashwednesday*) all the *Protestants*, that is, Heretick Kingdoms, with Bell, Book, and Candle, whilst Mr. *Necessity*, the Priest, is a poor Retailer, and gets not above Six-pence for his Sacred Orders, or power to bind and loose, I mean, (understand me right I say) he gets but Six pence a piece for every Soul.

Mr. *Necessity* is the best, because the easiest Chapman, if it were not that he is wholly guided and directed in all his *Anathemas* and *Abolutions* by that wretched Sell-Soul Register; for whose Sacred Orders to be uncurs'd, and consequently unjayld, I can prove, Sin and Souls are twenty times cheaper chaffer'd and truck'd for at Rome, Spain, or any Popish Priests in Christendom, than in the Bishop's Courts in England; as may be easily proved and appear to be true, by comparing the Book of Rates for each Sin and Sinner, with that now at Doctors-Commons, and that *Sancta Rata* in the Pope's Chancery at the Vatican.

Wretched Comforters are they all, to poor Souls, and poor Sinners; nay, worst of all to rich Sinners. Let us pray. Good Lord deliver us from them and the Devil. In nomine Domini. Amen.

Finally, As Her Majesty (this most prudent, loyal, and grave Parliament Assisting) has done such great things, at Home and Abroad, under the Conduct of One that seems to be the Favourite of Heaven, as well as the Court Favourite in the Four last Reigns (a felicity unparalleled in History) and speaks a miraculous Composure both of Soul and Body (to me, at least, that never saw him) and of whom we may therefore say, as in Holy Writ, *No Man can do the Miracles that he has done* (in Peace as well as War) except God be with him, in an especial manner. So may Her Gracious Majesty long continue to Merit (as hitherto she has done) the Title given to *Thine Vespasian*, for less desert, *Delicia humani Generis*, The Joy of the whole Earth. But the Darling of all her own People, except grumbling Jacobites, Papists and Memorial-Men of High-Church, whose mad Rage never leaves boiling till the Scum be uppermost, and that fear not, in Print, to pretend to that Popish and Antichristian Sham, of setting up the Pontifical above the Regale, the Priest above the Prince,

Pain, and the *Miser* above the *Crown*. By which *Christian Priests* they have enslaved all the Emperors, Kings, and States of Christendom, whilst they had so little *Wit*.

By the Gallery Ecclesiastical of *Antiquities*, Binding and
Lodging, Curling and Abloving, by *False Keys* of Heaven,
Hell, and Purgatory; which, though they have *Foremost*
enough to lay claim unto, yet all the Brains in their Skulls
jumbled together, are not able to evince and vouch for
The *Medications* brings to my Mind, as well as gives *some*
Faith and Credit to that old Prophecy of *Malin*, the *Heathen*
Prophet. It runs prettily in that old *British* Language, but
in English thus: "to what? what is not broken but broken?"

I will conclude with a *Trial of Skill*, which shall, without Controversy or further doubt, decide ~~the~~ Controversy concerning Excommunications, as they are now administer'd in Popish and Protestant Churches, Episcopal, Presbyterian, or Independant; whether they be of God or Men; wicked Men and proud Priests; Invented by Popes, and Priests to enslave the Laity (Soul and Body of) Emperors, Kings, and Kingdoms, to the Pope, and Popish-like Priests, to their Ecclesiastick Tyranny, and Lordly Pride and Oppression, in despite of Christ's Prohibition to the contrary.

Ask the Lord Bishops and Priests, whether they believe what they Preach, when they tell you from Holy Scripture, that the Gates of Hell, namely, the Strength and Power of Hell and Devils, and devilish and wicked Men combin'd, can never prevail against (or overturn and tumble down) Christ's Church, because Christ has founded it on a Rock, and not upon the frail Shoulders of Hangmen and Jailors, and Cursing Men to the Devil &c.

[illegible]

Lord Bishop, or Priest! Believest thou this that thou
 Preachest? If thou sayst, No, no, I do not believe it. Then
 I believe thou art an Atheist.

But if thou sayst (as I hope thou wilt) I do believe it;
 then tell me, why thou dost call to the Hangmen, the Jay-
 lons, and Executioners, to help to uphold thy tottering
 Church-Ordinance, Excommunication?

For if it be of God, neither I nor all Men living are
 able to oppose it. But if it be of Men, and a meer Priest-
 craft Sham and Cheat, invented by the Devil and the Pope,
 his Priests, and Popish-like Priests, on purpose to enslave
 the Laity to them, both in the Souls and Bodies of their
 Bigots or Fops, that have so little Wit as to believe them,
 whilst the Priests laugh in their Sleeves at the easy Credu-
 lity of their Poppish Bigots, that kiss the Rod, and thank
 the Priests for whipping of them, and the People committed
 to their Charge; neither protecting themselves nor their
 Subjects from Ecclesiastical Tyranny, Popery, and Slavery.
 If, I say, it be of Men, and a wicked, Priestly, and Anti-
 christian Engine and Machine it will come to nought.

Therefore let all Legislators, Emperors, Kings and States
 of Christendom, take the Advice of that wise and good
 Counsellor; Gamaliel, in Scripture, (which Advice all will
 take, that are not Infatuated and out of their Wits) namely,
 To abstain from these Men, and let these Priests alone; nei-
 ther hurt them nor help them in their Excommunications,
 with your Writs and your Hangmen and Jaylors, but let
 them stand and go on their own Legs, and curse the Laity
 and one another till their Hearts ache: Only stand still and
 see how speedily this Scare-crow and Ecclesiastick-Crack will
 sink and come to nought, and the Sell-Soul-Registers to be
 maintain'd by the Parish, if they be not stock'd with store
 of Money already, (as most of them are) with Money for
 damning and redeeming Sins and Souls. I can scarcely say,
 Much good may it do them; for it is a Sin to pray, — God speed.

The Total Sum of the foregoing Account amounts to this:
 namely, That there are, amongst the Temporal Kingdoms of
 Christendom, two Spiritual Kingdoms.

1. The

1. The Kingdom of Christ, called, by Christ, *The Kingdom of God*, which is within us, by the precious Light of Gospel-Truths, bringing Men from Darkness to Light, and from the Power of Satan unto God, mortifying the Carnal-Man, called, *The Old Man*, with his Deeds of Wrath, Anger, Cruelty, Rebellion, Pride, Avarice, Tyranny, Oppression, and every evil Work with which poor Mortals are shackled and carried Captives by Satan, at his Will. But putting on the *New Man* and converting, their *Understandings* are enlighten'd, their *Wills* and inordinate *Affections* regulated, and the whole *Mind* emancipated, enfranchis'd, manumitted, and set free from the power of Lust and Satan.

In this *Spiritual Kingdom* it is always *Fair Weather*, no Cry, no Groans, no Tyranny nor Oppression, and consequently no Murmuring nor Complaining in the Streets, (like the third Region of the Air) all serene and quiet, and nothing visible but Love and Kindness, good Humour, good Neighbourhood, good Fellowship, Mirth, and Peace, and a quiet Conscience.

2dly, There is a *Spiritual Kingdom of Antichrist*, called, *The Kingdom of Satan*, or of the God of this World, ruled, for his Ambition, *Lucifer*; for his Avarice, *Mammon*. Methinks I see him there, besmear'd with Blood and Filth, like Bishop Bonner, or a Devil Incarnate; therefore called, *The Man of Sin*, and sometimes, in Holy Writ, called *the Beast*, and the *Image and Picture of the Beast*; that is, *Popish*, and *Popish-like Antichristian Methods of the False Prophet*, *Cursing*, *Anathematizing*, *Ranting*, *Blustering*, and *Excommunicating*, and afterwards (by Laws first invented by the Pope, and *Popish-like Priests*) hurrying all to be burnt to Ashes, or Dragoon'd, Plunder'd, Jayl'd, Bury'd alive, and Tormented, if they will not *Worship the Beast nor his Image*; in some Countries by the bloody *Inquisition*, in others by the *Writs de Hæretico Comburendo*, and *de Excommunicato Capiendo*; in others, by *Horning*, and threatening their very *Kings* that dare oppose a Rigidity of Discipline more fierce and fiery than the *Inquisition* in Spain, *Dragooning* in France, the little Finger of an offended Lay-Elder, being thicker than the *Prelates Loins*.

This

This Evil-Spirit is sometimes called : *Aunyside*, by way of Emphasis, *The Antichrist*; sometimes, (as by *Stafford*) and now there is a *Witch* as *Walsingham* was working, and still working, and will and must work till *their wicked one* be revealed by the *Two Witnesses*; that is, the *five Witnesses*, tho' of the *smallest number*, yet they shall torment the Beast and his Image, and great Fear shall fall upon the evil Spirits, dreading (and yet enraged and raving) because they fear their Time is but short.

This Spirit of Antichrist is not the Turk; but (in pretence) a Christian Spirit, sitting in the Temple or Churches of God: mischief, and watch against it in all Churches Christian, whether Popish or Protestant, Episcopal or Presbyterian, or Independent. It strives to fly high, and over-top even all that is called God, the Emperors, and Kings, and Princes, and States: All States, except the *Hagen Mogun* States of Holland, where, therefore, Religion does the least harm. Pious, Meek, and Humble Clergy-Men in Holland are more beloved, admired, and adored than in any place in Christendom, by prudent and wise Men.

I do not deny tho', but a Popish Priest is more adored in Popish Countries, by the Bigotted Women and Fools, that believe that every bald-pated Fryar can make a God of a piece of Bread: but Men that are prudent and not Priest-ridden, in Popish Countries, to my knowledge, condemn and despise them in their Hearts, and often to their very Faces, as the most impudent and bare-faced Cheats in the World.

But some will say, What! Shall we have no Discipline in the Church? Yes, yes, God forbid else.

Nevertheless, will you be wiser than Christ and his Apostles, that first planted the Christian Religion and conquered Heathenism, and Heathen Emperors, by converting them with the purity of their Lives and Doctrine, their Patience in Suffering, and their Modest and Conversational, Not Blustering and Ranting, and Chiding and Damning every Soul to the Devil and the Jayl, that does not appease their Wrath with Money.

The Apostles, of whom the Pope and his Bishops, and our Archbishops and Bishops say, that they are the lawful Heirs and Successors, Heirs to continue for ever, and to the day

to view yd *his* *not* *had* *our* *saviour* *so* *much* *as* *a* *house* *and* *his* *head* *in* *from* *the* *raile* *and* *his* *apostles* *deserved* *afflicted* *tormented* *and* *yet* *such* *worthiness* *of* *which* *this* *world* *was* *not* *worthy* *to* *hugge* *and* *praise* *night* *and* *day* *with* *tears* *but* *is* *reconciled* *to* *God* *this* *is* *the* *only* *Christian* *Discipline* *of* *Christ's* *true* *Church* *and* *if* *a* *Member* *turn'd* *Apostate* *they* *only* *shamed* *him* *by* *avoiding* *his* *Company* *and* *having* *no* *Fellowship* *with* *him* *that* *he* *might* *blush* *if* *he* *had* *any* *Grace* *in* *him* *to* *live* *and* *be* *in* *the* *world*

But we have greater helps to good Discipline than the Apostles had, even the Sword of the Civil and Christian Magistrate (if he beare it not in vain) but be a terror to evil-doers and evil-speakers; but for evil-thinkers none can judge but God, the only searcher of Hearts: Let these Taxes grow amongst the Whores (because you do not know them) and the Harlots; lest you root up the Whore also: and lest you burn, and imprisonment, and plunder true Believers for Heresie.

Oh 'tis dangerous, as well as impious, for Governours, (that should be nursing-fathers and nursing-mothers to their growing and oppressed Subjects) to turn a deaf ear (stop'd by Priest-craft) to the cries and murmurs of their afflicted Subjects, lest the People swarm to get freed.

When the 5 Eliz. 22. had been a Probationer eighteen Years, concerning the said Popishly Invented Writ de Excommunicatione Capiendo, and the Inconvenience found, the Parliament in the 23 Eliz. drew up a Bill against it, and the Bill recommended by the greatest Counsellors of Estate in that Parliament, says Bacon, Lord Verulam, in his Considerations for the better establishment of the Church of England, page 22. which he calls, (as I will this present Parliament, that has made already such good progress to mend the Male-Administrations of our Laws Municipal) The greatest Parliament that she had known: All proved Abortive, by reason of some secret Whispers with which Royal Ears are often payson'd, or, at least, stop'd up.

But now is the time when the merciful God has given us a Queen, shou'd deservedly for Religion and Goodness, especially visible in her Moderation, in an even and equal Temper, neither guiding the Reins of Government too slack, nor too high.

Which

Which Moderation is, under God, the most steady establishment of Her Majesty's Government, showing Her Skill in King-craft, and is Her Wisdom and Policy refined, as well as Piety, winning thereby Her Peoples Hearts, and consequently can never want their Purfes, nor their helping-hands when She needs them. Whereas a Tyrant rags hard, by Dragoons, Loans, Benevolencies, and I know not what vile Arts, to get their Peoples Purfes; he pulls and they pull, and rag, till both are beggar'd and undone; hating and hated of one another.

The Poets say, that Phœbus, (their God of Wisdom) in his Advice to a Son, Phaeton, a hot-headed High-flyer, driving the Chariot of the Sun, says,

———— medio tutissimè idè.

*If then you would not go astray,
Take the safe Path, the middle way.*

O Moderation! blessed Moderation (in which all Vertue consists, betwixt two extreams) is now decried, in Print, by Men of Forehead, but little Brains; rash Memorial-Men, who (Phaeton-like) have hot Zeal, but little Knowledge: These, Her Majesty's Skill in Government has cooled, I had almost said quelled, lest (Phaeton-like) they had set all in Combustion and in a flame.

This Wisdom was miserably wanting, God knows, in some of Her Royal Predecessors, bigotted to their own, as well as their Peoples Woe.

F I N I S.

